



“Sunshine” or openness in government refers to access to public records and meetings. Regardless of what label an access law is given – “sunshine,” freedom of information, or transparency – the premise is that everyday people have the right to know what actions their government is taking.¹

The ☀️ Sunshine Report from the LWVLC Observer Corps:

Lane County Board of Commissioners

July 7, 2026 [[meeting agenda](#); [morning webcast](#); [afternoon webcast](#)]

The Board addressed **funding for the waste management transfer stations** provided throughout Lane County and paid for in part by a system benefit fee, collected from waste haulers when waste is brought to the Lane County landfill, Short Mountain. However, Sanipac has been trucking waste to the Dry Creek Landfill near Medford, resulting in a loss of fees that has caused a budget shortfall of \$3 million. After discussing various options for closing the shortfall, the Board approved the following cuts:

- The **Walton** transfer station will be closed.
- The **Creswell** transfer station will be open only on Friday and Saturday.
- The **Veneta** station will be closed Monday and Tuesday.
- An additional hike of 5% and a \$10 hike in minimum fees will be assessed.

These changes will raise over \$3 million in revenue, just addressing the shortfall. The recommendation passed, 4-0, with Commissioner Trieger on approved absence.

In the afternoon session, commissioners **reviewed and overturned the Planning Director’s denial of a Type II Non-farm Dwelling application in the case of a structure owned by Kathleen Jones-McCann**. At issue was that Jones-McCann built structures without permits in 2020, some of which encroached on a riparian area of the McKenzie River. According to the Rural Comprehensive Plan, building in the area requires a 100 foot riparian setback area (RSA) from the high water of a Class I stream; the McKenzie is so designated. A “backwater channel” of the McKenzie is located on the property. Based on the location of the RSA, which the County identified during a September 2024 site visit,

¹ LWV Observing Your Government in Action

the Director determined that several structures encroached into the RSA when measured from the high water of the channel. Permits for construction, which presumably would have detected this issue, were not obtained when construction was started in 2020. Jones-McCann said they had tried to get permits in 2020, but were unable to because of the pandemic. City staff said that the permitting office was open, except for several days at the beginning of the pandemic.

County planning staff believed that the data supported their opposition to the request for the non-farm dwelling application, but several of the commissioners stated that, while the failure to obtain permits was unfortunate, errors occur in projects and the County should not penalize such errors when development is important in Lane County. Commissioner Buch stated that people involved in the initial construction should have known that permits were required prior to construction, and to continue construction without permits was egregious behavior. This behavior resulted in remedies after the fact which are challenging, expensive, and time-consuming. She urged people to go through the correct process, including obtaining permits.

The outcome of the hearing was to allow Jones-McCann's application. Commissioners Ceniga, Loveall, and Farr voted in favor while Commissioner Buch voted against. (Commissioner Trieger was not present with an excused absence.)

[Note: On June 11, 2026, [the Eugene Weekly](#), reported that prior to the Spring 2026 election, Kathleen Jones-McCann contributed \$46,716 to Commissioner Ceniga (36% of the total his campaign raised); \$42,215 to Commissioner Loveall (nearly 30% of his total); and \$57,656 to Jake Pelroy, who ran against Commissioner Buch.]

☀️ **Reported by: Nancy Mills**

Springfield School Board

July 6, 2026 [[meeting agenda](#); [webcast recording](#)]

Labeled an organizational meeting, this was the first Board meeting for interim Superintendent Dr. Shawn Stover and Assistant Superintendent Brian Megert. Former Director Nicole DeGraff was not in attendance as she resigned effective June 30, 2026.

The Board selected Jonathan Light as Board Chair and Amber Langworthy as Vice Chair. Both nominations were unopposed and passed unanimously.

The Board passed a Structural Repairs Resolution to address repairs to engineered wood trusses at ten school sites. **The repairs are required to restore property insurance coverage** that was excluded for these sites. Previously, at the June 8, 2026, meeting, the Board had been asked to approve a \$3.43 million contract plus a 30% contingency (\$1.03 million) for structural repairs to engineered wood trusses at ten school sites. However, the Board took no action on the proposed contract because of (a) the lack of all appropriate

contract information, (b) the open-endedness of both cost and contingency, and (c) the fact that a 30% contingency is far above the normal contingency of 3% to 7%.

The Structural Repairs Resolution was presented with four funding options, all of which contained a contingency rate of 7.82% (\$268,305) and an upper limit of \$3.7 million. The Board opted for the financing option that does not require payments to begin until FY2027-28. This option spans 10 years but has no early pay off penalties if the District is able to complete the obligation sooner.

The Board voted to accept a schedule of two meetings per month for the new fiscal year. The second Monday of each month will be scheduled as a Business Meeting, and the fourth Monday will be scheduled as a Work Session. Only one meeting will be held for the months of November, December, March, and May due to holidays. The Board will have an all-day retreat Wednesday, August 5, 2026.

 **Reported by: Patty Sandoz and Kim Weston**

Eugene Water and Electric Board (EWEB)

June 7, 2026 [[meeting agenda](#)]

During **Public Comment**, three people spoke in favor of the new Willamette water treatment plant, with one of them also complimenting EWEB on the newly opened recreational facilities in the Carmen-Smith recreation area. Another person expressed a desire to meet the new GM and pointed out that there is no narrative on **the stormwater billing portion of the EWEB bill to explain why charges have increased 50%** since 2023. Commissioner Brown noted that stormwater fees are collected on EWEB bills for the City of Eugene, so the city should be explaining the purpose of their increased fee, not EWEB.

Commissioners discussed the following five alternatives regarding the **construction of a Willamette River Treatment plant** (for details about each alternative, see pages 7-17 of the [Willamette Treatment Plant analysis](#)):

1. 2017 Plant Design/10 MGD: indoor residential use at safe water quality (cost: \$160M).
2. 2026 Plant Design/10 MGD: indoor residential use at full water quality (cost: \$269M).
3. Staff-preferred Alternative/19.4 MGD Plant Design: Full redundancy to the current Hayden Bridge Water Treatment Plant during winter (cost: \$337 M).
4. 30 MGD Plant Design: Full redundancy to Hayden Bridge most of the year; utilizes all of Willamette River water rights available and will require additional rights to be purchased (cost \$ 392M+ cost of additional water rights).
5. No new plant; rebuild existing facilities (cost: \$239M).

The Board voted unanimously for alternative #4 and to proceed with staff-proposed contracting options for the new facility, to be located on McVay Highway, south of Glenwood and east of I-5 near the Willamette/McKenzie River Confluence. Staff will provide information to the Board in August on the cost of rate increases, the status of water rights availability, and a communication plan.

Prior to the Board's discussion, staff presented compelling arguments for taking action. First, any number of catastrophic actions such as hazardous spill, fire, earthquake, or ice storms causing power outages could close Hayden Bridge water facility down and Eugene, as well as some surrounding communities like Veneta, would be without water. Second, for nine years, EWEB has held water rights for 19.4 million gallons of water per day (MGD) from the Willamette River and the rights would sunset in 2033 if unused. Finally, in 2040 the Hayden Bridge water treatment facility will be 90 years old; an alternate water supply is needed so that the facility can go off-line for inspection and repairs, as necessary. Commissioners Carlson, Schlossburg, Morrison, and Brown originally came out in support of staff-proposed Alternative 3, but Commissioner Barofsky encouraged the Board to reconsider Alternative 4. The following points were made in the ensuing discussion:

- Alternative 4 is the most economical option (lowest building cost for MGD).
- If Commissioners chose Alternative 3 and wanted to add on later, it would cost 50% more because of additional design and construction costs.
- All permits required to initiate construction have been requested for 30 MGD flow; however, EWEB only has water rights for 19.4 MGD. Cost and availability of additional rights are unknown.
- Commissioner Barofsky cited a robust bond market, a competent project manager, and potentially available rights to water being held in Dexter and Lookout Point Reservoirs.
- Commissioner Brown suggested that Alternative 4 would enable EWEB to become a regional water supplier to small communities currently getting their water from dwindling supplies of ground water; so, EWEB may need additional capacity.
- Commissioner Carlson noted the higher costs of Alternative 4 and her discomfort in adding costs to ratepayers.
- Staff noted there may be some grants available to defray some of the costs, but that ratepayers will likely pay for most of the cost for the new plant.
- Commissioner Schlossberg noted that going with Alternative 4 means it will be harder to make decisions on other items that may need funding from the water program, such as watershed restoration funding.
- There will be opportunities to back off of Alternative 4 and go with Alternative 3 at certain design benchmarks, if water rights can not be obtained or the cost to ratepayers is just too high.

Staff requested direction from the Board in developing the [2027 Electric and Integrated Capital and Finance Plan](#). Tension exists between the Board's request to keep electric

rates affordable and EWEB's needs for income in the next 10 years. Projected costs include higher than anticipated costs for Carmen Smith relicensing, decommissioning the Leaburg Dam, and updating substations. A number of capital improvements have already been deferred, and staff warned that this may result in a higher rate of electrical outages. Staff suggested a 3.5% increase to electrical rates in 2027.

☀️ **Reported by: Jenny Lippert**

Oakridge City Council

July 02, 2026 [[meeting agenda](#); [webcast recording](#)]

Guen DiGioia, Community Development Director and City Planner, presented information to the Council about a pre-application for a **2026 Community Development Block Grant** (CDBG), including key criteria, for securing the funding. The motion authorizes the City to apply for a \$1.5 million grant to help replace funds lost earlier this year and continue renovations at the Willamette Activity Center (WAC). City Administrator James Cleavenger noted that the Council has already agreed the WAC should include community and social services.

The Council approved the recommendation by the Rural Tourism Marketing Program (RTMP/TRT) Committee to award \$2,000 to the 18th **Keg and Cask Festival** and \$3,000 to **Oakridge Concerts in the Park** for two August shows. Although both organizations have received funding for more than three years and would be ineligible under the new rules, their requests were submitted before the effective date July 1. Neither motion generated discussion.

This is the third year for the **Rods at the Ridge** event, but the first year they have requested funding. Jennifer and Ken Jordan were online and answered a few questions from the councilors. The complete request for \$4000 was approved.

The Council approved City Administrator James Cleavenger's revision of draft Resolution 09-2026, which would **create a five-year tax levy for ambulance service**, and a levy rate of \$1.64 per \$1,000 of assessed value. Both will be sent to the city attorney for review. Councilors generally agreed that the new language more clearly explained the charge and clarified that residents would not pay both the \$17 water-bill fee and a property tax assessment. Council Brewer was the only dissenting vote. Cleavenger again noted that cities the size of Oakridge typically do not operate ambulance service and that, without local funding, the city would have to rely on Springfield's ambulance service, about an hour away.

☀️ **Reported by: Leslie Heaton**

The Observer Corps is a group of LWVLC members who pledge to regularly attend government meetings and report back to the Lane County League. We have Observers at

the County Commissioners meetings, Eugene City Council, Springfield City Council, Oakridge City Council, Lane Community College Board, Springfield School District, and Eugene Water and Electricity Board. To keep you informed, we will distribute their reports by email twice a month. When topics arise that require action or attendance by a larger number of us, LWVLC will send out an email "Call for Action".

If you are interested in joining the Observer Corps, please contact Terry Parker, President (president@lwvlc.com) or Beatrice McKenzie (beatricem@lwvlc.org). We hope to recruit one or two members for each government group. You can attend a meeting first before you pledge to go regularly.